

sometimes it's just not that simple as seeking out resources."

CRISIS IN GAZA

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, the crisis in Gaza is extremely distressing, particularly to those who had hope for Secretary of State Kerry's years of shuttle diplomacy between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

After seeing several similar attempts fail in the past, we know that for such diplomacy to succeed over the long term it will require the participation not only of representatives of the Israeli and Palestinian parties to the conflict but also the active support of Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and the other Arab states.

Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas are not able to reach an agreement to end the conflict themselves. Also, any agreement that lacks the support of Hamas or that cannot withstand the active opposition of Hamas will almost certainly fail.

According to the Government of Israel, at least 2,600 Hamas rockets and mortars have been fired indiscriminately toward Israel, forcing thousands of Israelis into basements and bomb shelters. Fortunately, most have landed harmlessly, and the U.S.-supplied Iron Dome missile defense system has intercepted many others.

The latest report of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs paints a chilling picture of death and destruction in Gaza.

Hamas has placed rocket launchers, ammunition, and tunnels in the midst of densely populated residential areas, even in mosques and U.N. facilities, and they are being targeted by Israeli bombs, missiles, and tank shells. Of course, civilians are literally trapped in the crossfire. As of today, at least 1,118 Palestinians have been killed, 6,233 injured, and 240,000 displaced from their homes, many of which have been damaged or destroyed. The overwhelming majority of the victims have been civilians.

It is clear that Hamas's leaders, who specialize in terrorist tactics, care far more about their fighters than the safety of Gaza's civilian population. Yet even safe havens, such as clearly marked United Nations schools and hospitals, have been hit by Israeli bombs or missiles, and at least one may have been hit by a Hamas rocket. Many people, including children, seeking shelter have been killed and injured as a result.

During this same period, 56 Israeli soldiers have been killed, 400 have been wounded, and 3 Israeli civilians have died.

I sympathize with the argument that Israel had little choice but to respond forcefully to Hamas's rocket attacks. It is hard to imagine any government faced with a similar threat to its citizens not responding.

I also support, as we all do, the Israeli Government's goal of eliminating Hamas's heavy weapons and destroying the dozens of tunnels that are used to smuggle them into Gaza and to enable Hamas fighters to sneak into Israel to kill Israelis.

But this is not the first time Israel has sought to achieve these goals only to fall short, at great human cost. Operation Cast Lead in 2008 resulted in 1,400 Palestinian deaths and the deaths of 3 Israeli civilians and 6 Israeli soldiers. Then in 2012 there was Operation Pillar of Defense. Each time, despite the destruction of Hamas's weapons, launchers, and command posts, Hamas remained in control of Gaza.

After each of these operations, Hamas rearmed and is as determined today as it was 2 years ago. It does not appear that either goal, even if justified and laudable, can be achieved for the long term—if at all—without inflicting unacceptable civilian casualties.

Israeli authorities stress that its army tries its best to avoid civilian casualties. They know the impact each innocent death has on world opinion and on the Palestinian people. Thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank, many of whom despise Hamas, have joined in demonstrations against Israel because of the loss of civilian lives in Gaza.

But what is often ignored in the impassioned debate over this issue, including by those who rightly point out that the Israeli military at times provides prior warning to civilians of an imminent attack, is that Gaza is not like anywhere else. Its residents cannot flee to safety in a neighboring country, as millions of Syrians have done. They cannot even escape by boat. Shelters in Gaza that should be safe are not safe. The people of Gaza are, for all practical purposes, defenseless, trapped, and unable to avoid the violence.

Hamas has insisted that it will not cease its attacks until Israel ends its export, import, and border restrictions on Gaza, which the people of Gaza, who lack safe water, sanitation, reliable electricity, and other basic necessities, say have made their daily lives nearly impossible. With each passing day, condemnation of the violence has intensified. Yet the death toll has continued to rise.

I commend Secretary Kerry for his efforts to broker a humanitarian ceasefire. There never has been a military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and there is not one today. He deserves our strong support.

If the ceasefire announced today holds and if the United States continues to serve as the principle diplomatic intermediary, there needs to be some new thinking regarding our negotiating strategy. We cannot afford another dozen years with nothing to show for it, with the chasm between Israelis and Palestinians even deeper, with radical extremists further emboldened,

and yet another calamity like the one we are witnessing today.

It is difficult to see how that will be prevented if Hamas continues to reject Israel's right to exist and refuses to renounce terrorism, which is fundamental to any solution that brings lasting peace and security to both Israelis and Palestinians, nor is it likely to be prevented absent a decision by Israel to substantially ease its economic restrictions on Gaza. That may be the only way to eliminate Hamas's excuse for its rocket attacks, to bring desperately needed economic development to Gaza, and to create the necessary conditions for the disarming of Hamas.

With each passing day, the grave consequences for the people of Gaza and Israel, for stability in the region, and for the security of the United States have become more apparent. The White House should use every ounce of its influence to help bring this tragic chapter of history finally to an end.

CYPRUS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of the 40th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in July 1974, which resulted in the division of Cyprus.

In 1974, a Turkish military invasion divided Cyprus into two de facto regions, forcing tens of thousands of Cypriots to flee their homes. Today, Turkish troops continue to occupy northern Cyprus and, after four decades, the country remains divided.

This month, the United States remembers those who were forced to flee their homes and lost their property, and we acknowledge the economic, political, and humanitarian impacts of this division. I stand to reaffirm our commitment and support for a comprehensive agreement to achieve reunification.

I am proud of the strong relationship between the United States and the Republic of Cyprus, and of our mutual commitment to democracy, counterterrorism, and economic development. I look forward to the day when this important partnership is made even stronger by a unified Cyprus.

I am encouraged by the February 2014 announcement that Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu would resume long-stalled reunification talks. I am hopeful that these meetings will lay the groundwork for peaceful negotiations that will result in a fair and lasting solution.

RECOGNIZING GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise in recognition of the George Washington University Native American Political Leadership Program and the INSPIRE Pre-College Program.